

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT REPORT

AN EVALUATION OF THE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SOURCES TO POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION

CT1630011

Windham Water Works Willimantic Reservoir System

The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently completed an initial assessment of the Willimantic Reservoir System, which is a source of public drinking water that is maintained and operated by the Windham Water Works. This one-time assessment is part of a nationwide effort mandated by Congress under the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 to evaluate the susceptibility of all public drinking water sources in Connecticut to potential sources of contamination. DPH began working in partnership with the DEP in 1997 to develop Connecticut's Source Water Assessment Program, which was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1999. Sources of potential contamination that are of concern to public drinking water supplies here in Connecticut are generally associated with historic waste disposal or commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential properties that store or use hazardous materials like petroleum products, solvents or agricultural chemicals.

The assessment is intended to provide Windham Water Works consumers with information about where their public drinking water comes from, sources of potential contamination that could impact it, and what can be done to help protect it. This initial assessment complete will also assist the public water supply system, regional planners, local government, public health officials and state agencies in evaluating the degree to which the Willimantic Reservoir System may be at risk from potential sources of contamination. The assessment can be used to target and implement enhanced source water protection measures such as routine inspections, protective land use regulations, acquisition of critical land, proper septic system maintenance, and public education. General sources of contamination with the potential to impact the Willimantic Reservoir System include properties with underground fuel storage tanks, improperly maintained on-site septic systems, improper waste disposal, or commercial/industrial sites that store or use chemicals or generate hazardous wastes.

Willimantic Reservoir System Source Water Assessment Summary

STRENGTHS

Point source pollution discharge points not present in this watershed area

More than 20% of the land in the watershed area exists as preserved open space

POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

Potential contaminant sources present in the watershed

Less than 1% of watershed area owned by public water system

Susceptibility Rating			
Rating	Environmental Sensitivity	Potential Risk Factors	Source Protection Needs
Low			
Moderate	X		
High		X	X

Overall Susceptibility Rating: High

This rating indicates susceptibility to potential sources of contamination that may be in the source water area and does not necessarily imply poor water quality.

Detailed information about the specific factors and information used in establishing this rating can be found in Table 2. Information about opportunities to improve protection in the Willimantic Reservoir System is also presented in Table 2.



Keeping Connecticut Healthy

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Drinking Water Division

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OVERVIEW - The Willimantic Reservoir System watershed encompasses some 106,157 acres of land in Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Mansfield, Pomfret, Scotland, Union, Willington, Windham, Woodstock and Massachusetts. Approximately 0.0% of this watershed is owned by the Windham Water Works. Public drinking water sources in this system include Willimantic and Mansfield Hollow reservoirs. State-wide satellite imagery developed by the University of Connecticut indicates that undeveloped land and residential properties presently account for approximately 74.0% percent of the land cover in the Willimantic Reservoir System. Commercial development at 5.1% and agricultural land use at 20.9% account for the remainder of the land coverage in the source water area. Approximately 26.5% of the land in the watershed area is preserved including all watershed land owned by the Windham Water Works, state forest and parklands, and municipally or privately held land designated as open space. Information about drinking water quality and treatment is available in the Windham Water Works's annual Consumer Confidence Report.

ASSESSMENT METHODS.

The drinking water source assessment methods used by the Department of Public Health Drinking Water Division to evaluate the susceptibility of public drinking water sources to contamination are based on criteria individually tailored to surface water and groundwater sources. The criteria are keyed to sanitary conditions in the source water area, the presence of potential or historic sources of contamination, existing land use coverage's, and the need for additional source protection measures within the source water area. Source-specific data for community and non-community systems were used to determine whether a particular criterion should be rated as low, moderate or high, relative to the risk of potential contamination at the drinking water source. Further, a ranking system was used to compute an average rank for each community drinking water source based on its environmental sensitivity, potential risk of contamination and source protection needs. Watersheds and reservoirs rated as having a low, moderate or high susceptibility to potential sources of contamination generally exhibit the characteristics summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – General Watershed Area Characteristics and Susceptibility Ratings

Susceptibility Rating	General Characteristics of the Watershed Area*
Low	Low density of potential contaminant sources Lower intensity of land development
Moderate	Low to moderate density of potential contaminant sources Moderate intensity of land development
High	Moderate to high density of potential contaminant sources Higher intensity of land development No local watershed protection regulations Detectable nitrates and/or volatile organic chemicals in the untreated source water during the past three years that are below the maximum contaminant levels allowed by state and federal drinking water regulations

** Note: Not all characteristics may be present for a given susceptibility rating*

Readers of this assessment are encouraged to use the attached glossary to assist in the understanding of the terms and concepts used throughout this report.

Maps representing the location and features of the Willimantic Reservoir System source water area have not been included with this assessment report because of homeland security concerns.

WILLIMANTIC RESERVOIR SYSTEM ASSESSMENT RESULTS.

Based on a combination of current reservoir and watershed area conditions, existing potential contaminant sources, and the level of source protection measures currently in place, the source water assessment for this watershed system indicates that it has an overall High risk of contamination from any identified potential sources of contamination. The assessment findings for the Willimantic Reservoir System are summarized in Table 2, which lists current conditions in the source water area and recommendations or opportunities to enhance protection of this public drinking water source. A listing of potential contaminant source types in the area, if present, can be found in Table 3. A summary of source water area features is shown in Table 4. It should be noted that this rating does not necessarily imply poor water quality or ongoing violations of the Connecticut Public Health Code.

The assessment of this and other comparable watershed areas throughout Connecticut generally finds that adopting recommendations similar to those presented in Table 2 could reduce the susceptibility of most surface water sources to potential sources of contamination.

Table 2 Source Water Assessment Findings and Source Protection Opportunities For the Willimantic Reservoir System

Assessment Category	Conditions as of June 2002	Recommendations and Source Protection Opportunities
Environmental Sensitivity Factors Contaminants Detected in Untreated Source Water	Predominant watershed topography characterized by gentle slopes Reservoirs have moderate or unknown capacity to support excessive growths of algae and plankton None Click here to review EPA's current drinking water standards	Monitor runoff during heavy precipitation events Monitor reservoir nutrient levels in eutrophic or mesotrophic sources and determine trophic status of source waters listed as unknown Encourage homeowners to adopt residential best management practices that minimize the use of hazardous materials or generation of hazardous waste in the watershed.
Potential Risk Factors	Potential contaminant sources present in the watershed More than 50% of land for this source water area is undeveloped, which could present a risk if developed inappropriately. Major state or interstate roadways present in the watershed Known contaminant release points present in the watershed	Periodically inspect these sites and maintain a water quality monitoring program consistent with the level of potential risk Proactively work with local officials and developers to insure that only low-risk development occurs within the watershed area Monitor road salt and herbicide usage along these roadways and address potential for hazardous material spills resulting from vehicular accidents Maintain an adequate level of surveillance around contaminant release point sites to insure that surface water contamination is not occurring Encourage residential property owners to inspect and regularly cleanout onsite septic systems and replace underground fuel storage tanks with above ground tanks.
Source Protection Needs Factors	Less than 1% of watershed area owned by public water system Point source pollution discharge points not present in this watershed area	Increase ownership or control of watershed area whenever land becomes available for purchase or support land acquisition by public or private conservation/preservation organizations Support environmental awareness and education within the community.

Inventoried significant potential contaminant sources present in the Willimantic Reservoir System source water area are listed in Table 3. While these facilities, if present, have the potential to cause surface water contamination; there is no indication that they are doing so at this time.

Table 3 – Summary of Significant Potential Contaminant Types in the Willimantic Reservoir System Source Water Area

Category	Subcategory	Number of SPCS Types
Waste Storage, Handling, Disposal	Hazardous Waste Facilities	4
	Solid Waste Facilities	4
	Miscellaneous	1
Bulk Chemical, Petroleum Storage	Underground Storage Tanks	65
	Tank Farms	1
	Warehouses	8
Industrial Manufacturing / Processing	Chemical & Allied Production	0
	Chemical Use Processing	0
	Miscellaneous	0
Commercial Trades and Services	Automotive and Related Services	21
	Chemical Use Services	0
	Miscellaneous	0
Miscellaneous	No Identifiable SPCS Type	3
Agricultural Operations	Animal or Livestock Waste Handling	15
	Pesticide Storage or Application	1
Total Number of Contaminant Types		123

Prominent features of the Willimantic Reservoir System source water area are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 - Features of the Willimantic Reservoir System

Location of Watershed Area	Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Mansfield, Pomfret, Scotland, Union, Willington, Windham, Woodstock and Massachusetts
Name of Reservoir(s) and Diversion(s)	Willimantic and Mansfield Hollow reservoirs
Number and Type of Public Drinking Water Reservoirs or Diversions in the Watershed	1 Distribution and 1 Storage
Trophic Status of Reservoir(s)	1 Mesotrophic and 1 Unknown
DEP Surface Water Classification	B/AA
Watershed Area (total acreage)	106,157 acres
Preserved Land in the Watershed ^a	28,161 acres
Predominant Watershed Topography	gentle slopes
General Land Use and Land Cover in the Watershed ^b	
-Urban - Commercial or Industrial	5.1%
-Urban - Residential	5.9%
-Agricultural	20.9%
-Undeveloped Land	68.1%
Significant Potential Contamination Sources	
-Number of inventoried facilities in source water area ^c	103
-Count of inventoried facilities per square mile	0.62 per sq mile
-Number of contaminant types within inventoried facilities	123
Number of Contaminant Release Points Inventoried by CTDEP ^d	19

^a Preserved land includes any combination of land owned by the public water supply, state forest and parklands, and municipally or privately held land designated as open space.

^b Based on statewide data layer of land use and land cover developed by UCONN Dept of Natural Resource Management Engineering and Connecticut DEP satellite imagery averaged across the entire watershed.

^c Inventoried facilities reflect the actual number of SPCS sites present in the source water area, which may have more than 1 type of contaminant present at the facility.

^d Sites or locations with documented accidental spills, leaks or discharges. While these sources, which are cataloged and tracked by the Connecticut DEP, may fall within a public drinking water supply source water area, they may or may not presently be discharging to the environment or causing contamination of a public drinking water source.